



Answers to Common Questions about a Government “Shutdown”

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OVERVIEW

A “shutdown” of the federal government is a rare occurrence, and is no way to run a country because it can cause serious hardship for millions of hardworking Americans, interrupt critical services and even jeopardize our national security. However, in the event of a shutdown, it is important to understand that many government agencies, programs and services will continue without interruption. Here are answers to some of the common questions about this situation:

Will I still receive my Social Security benefits?

Social Security benefits are not subject to annual Congressional appropriation, as they are considered mandatory spending already authorized by law. Therefore, the Social Security Administration will continue to send checks, including disability payments. However, in the event of a prolonged government shutdown, there could be possible delays.¹

Would Medicare payments continue for health care providers and ER visits?

Medicare services for current beneficiaries will continue without interruption in the event of a government shutdown. Medicare is not subject to annual Congressional appropriation, as it is considered mandatory spending already authorized by law. Thus, according to the Department of

¹ <https://www.ssa.gov/agency/shutdown/materials/contingency-plan.pdf>

Health and Human Services, states will have sufficient funding for Medicaid through the second quarter of 2018, due to the authority granted under the Continuing Resolution (CR) for appropriated entitlements. Also, CMS will maintain sufficient staff to make payments to eligible states from remaining Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) carryover balances.²

Will I still receive my daily mail?

The United States Postal Service (USPS) receives no taxpayer dollars for its daily operating expenses. Because the USPS relies instead on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations, mail deliveries will continue as normal.³

Will I still receive my VA benefits? Will the VA hospitals shutdown?

According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the two main categories of activities that are authorized by law in the event of a lapse of funding are those involving the safety of human life and/or the protection of property. These essential services include providing: consistent, high quality medical care; compensation and pension benefits; housing; and burial services. Thus, VA hospitals will remain fully operational and the VA will continue to provide compensation and pension benefits to our veterans.⁴

Will there be any disruptions in the Federal Aviation Administration system at U.S. airports? Will air traffic controllers be affected?

Air traffic controllers are considered essential government employees, and will continue to operate as normal according to the Federal Aviation Administration.⁵

Will the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at airports be affected?

TSA screeners ensure the security of air travel within the United States, and because of this essential function, TSA will not be affected and should maintain normal operations. However, in the event of a prolonged government shutdown, wait times at airport screening checkpoints could see a possible increase.

Will prisons remain secure?

Everyone who works at a Federal Bureau of Prisons facility is considered a federal corrections officer, and all prison employees serve a critical function. Although there could be some furloughed employees in administrative positions, employees working on intelligence and monitoring will likely be considered essential. The same is likely to be true for those responsible for the pre-trial detainees held in the custody of the U.S. Marshal Service.⁶

² <https://www.hhs.gov/about/budget/fy-2018-hhs-contingency-staffing-plan/index.html#summary-of-activities>

³ <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-facts/top-10-things-to-know.htm>

⁴ <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/43654/va-contingency-plan-2017/>

⁵ <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/mission/budget/303716/usdot-consolidated-2018-shutdown-summary.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.justice.gov/jmd/page/file/1015676/download>

Will U.S. military operations be impacted?

According to the United States Department of Defense (DOD) contingency operation plans for a lapse in government funding, military personnel on active duty, including reserve components and military operations in Afghanistan and against the Islamic State and al-Qaeda would continue as normal, including any forces authorized for deployment into military conflicts. Furthermore, any DOD civilian employee who directly supports U.S. military operations would not be furloughed.⁷

Would resources for our troops be impacted by the shutdown?

DOD guidance does not identify every exempt activity, but it does make clear decisions will take into account that our nation is at war, and guarantee robust support for those engaged in the battle, to assure that the lives and property of our nation's citizens will be fully protected.

What will happen to military installations and will they have to close?

U.S. military operations and activities that are determined to be necessary for national security, including administrative, logistical, medical, and other activities in direct support of such operations and activities for our men and women in uniform, will be exempt from a government shutdown.

Can I still visit the medical facility at my local military installation?

Inpatient care in DOD Medical Treatment facilities, and attendant maintenance of patient medical records and benefits, will not be impacted and should maintain normal operations.

Will the national parks and museums remain open?

All national parks, museums and zoos must be closed during a shutdown as non-essential government services.

Will the federal government still process my application for a passport, gun permit, or federally-funded small business loan?

As these types of government services are classified as non-essential, they will be halted for the duration of any shutdown.

For specific information regarding contingency plans of any federal department or agency, please refer to the Office of Management and Budget for a link to each plan:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/agency-contingency-plans/>

⁷ <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/GUIDANCE-FOR-CONTINUATION-OF-OPERATIONS-DURING-A-LAPSE-OF-APPROPRIATIONS.pdf>